Climate Smart Agriculture Dialogue: a summary

Prof. Jamie Pittock
Transforming Irrigation in Southern Africa
Australian National University
Jamie.Pittock@anu.edu.au
Climate smart agriculture is essential

• Urgent need!
• Minister Didiza’s presence demonstrates the importance for society
• Amazing participations from organisations – government, research and industry
• Fantastic to see social and physical sciences here, e.g. SA Human Sciences Research Council
• So much happening! So much potential!
Climate smart agriculture – what is it?

• Complicated! The objectives have evolved: Land tenure, land and soils, surface and groundwater, energy, Indigenous knowledge, equity – gender and youth, learning and mentoring, monitoring and benchmarking, financing, partnerships and policies, and more …

• Adaptation to climate variability and change involving:
  a) more social and economic benefit from limited natural resources use, &
  b) building greater equity, human capacity and resilience
And what of climate change mitigation?

Passing mentions …
• Better soil management?
• Landcare?
• Energy – Water – Agriculture nexus?
• Circular food systems?

But agriculture can contribute more to reducing emissions and sequestering carbon …

And benefit from financing and an enhanced social license
Observation 1: Hectares and technology alone are not enough – it’s the people

• Why the obsession with hectare targets?
• E.g. Does the area irrigated really matter? Africa is physically very different to Asia.
• Isn’t it much more important how productively farm land is used is used?
• Fabulous examples presented of manyfold increases in yields, e.g. Grains SA
• Will investing in people yield more?
• Is demand driven development more effective? Value adding businesses?
Observation 2: Supporting the disadvantaged

• The need to support women, youth and other potentially disadvantaged groups achieve more equitable livelihoods

• A lot of rhetoric, but how to achieve practical change?

• Key analysis of youth in irrigation communities (Parry)

• Greater understanding of gender disadvantage

• Time to step up actions to enhance equity. Training and mentoring? Land tenure? Financing?
Observation 3: Monitoring, learning, benchmarking and mentoring

Monitoring, learning, benchmarking and mentoring catalyse more resilient farming – outstanding examples presented:

• Chameleon and Full Stop tools catalyse learning – Virtual Irrigation Academy

• SA wine and grains industries monitoring, benchmarking and mentoring programs

How can these kinds of programs be systematically extended to other industries and geographies?
A final thought

• A fabulous cavalcade of organisations and their excellent programs
• We have each presented many incremental examples, reforms and ideas towards climate smart agriculture
• But is this really going to lead to the transformational change required?
• How can we best integrate the enthusiasm and knowledge here? Enhance the CAADP commitments?
• A job for FANRPAN and our next Dialogue?
Thanks!

• FANRPAN for facilitating the Dialogue

• Donor and partner organisations

• Fabulous participants: ~120 in person and ~145 online